

Kurdistan Regional Government  
Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research  
KOYA UNIVERSITY



32  
2014

JOURNAL OF  
**KOYA UNIVERSITY**  
Humanities

An Academic Journal Published by Koya University

ISSN. 2073-0713

مجلة  
جامعة كويه  
( العلوم الانسانية )

مجلة أكاديمية تصدرها جامعة كويه

JOURNAL OF KOYA UNIVERSITY



## أهداف وتعليمات نشر الأبحاث في المجلة الأكاديمية لجامعة كويه

١- تنشر مجلة جامعة كويه الأبحاث العلمية القيمة والاصيلة في مجالات العلوم الانسانية من داخل وخارج الاقليم، على ان لا يكون منشورا أو مقبولا للنشر في مجلة أخرى، وتخضع الأبحاث المقدمة للتقويم العلمي، وتنشر المجلة الأبحاث باللغات الكوردية والعربية والانكليزية ويزود الباحث بنسختين من بحثه مجانا.

٢- يطبع البحث المقدم للنشر على الورق الابيض من قياس (A4) مع ترك ٢,٥ سم من الجهات الاربعة وعلى ان لا تزيد عدد الصفحات الكلية للبحث عن ٢٥ صفحة (بضمنها الاشكال والجداول)، ويكون ترقيم الصفحات في وسط اسفل الصفحة.

٣- يقدم الباحث ثلاث نسخ من البحث الى سكرتارية مجلة عن طريق عمادة فاكلتني اذا كان الباحث من منتسبي الجامعة ويرتب البحث على النحو التالي:

١- عنوان البحث (على ان تتوسط اعلى الصفحة الاولى) وحجم الحروف ١٤ عميق وبخط ALI-A.JIDDAH

بالنسبة للبحوث العربية و ALI-K.JIDDAH بالنسبة للبحوث الكوردية Times New Roman

بالنسبة للبحوث الانكليزية.

ب- اسم الباحث او الباحثين مع عناوينهم ووضع علامه نجمه عند الباحث الرئيس وحجم الحروف ١٤ للمتن و١٢ للمهامش للبحوث المكتوبة باللغة العربية وباللغة الانكليزية وبحجم ١٦ والمهامش ١٤ بالنسبة للبحوث المكتوبة باللغة العربية.

ج- ملخص البحث (Summary) بلفة اعداد البحث على ان لا يزيد عن صفحة موضعا فيها الهدف والنتائج والتوصيات، ثم تليها الكلمات الداله (keywords) وتتبعها مقدمه (Introduction) ثم المواد وطرائق العمل (Methodology) ويذكر فيها التقنيات ووسائل البحث والطرق الاحصائية، ثم النتائج (Results)، ويعددها المناقشة (Discussion) والمصادر (References) على ان تكتب العناوين الفرعية بخط ALI-A.SAMIK بالنسبة للبحوث العربية و ALI-K.SAMIK بالنسبة للبحوث الكوردية، اما مضمون البحوث الكوردية فتكتب بخط ALI-K.SHARIF والعربية بخط ALI-A.SHARIF Times New Roman والانكليزية وتعتمد الخط (١٤) لكتابة المضمون.

د- الخلاصة باللغتين الاخرتين وحجم الحروف ١٢ في نهاية البحث.

٤- يعتمد اسلوب ذكر اسم الباحث والسنة في متن البحث وترتب المصادر في النهاية حسب الحروف ويكون اسلوب كتابة المصدر كالآتي:

أ- للبحث : اسم الباحث او الباحثين (السنة)، عنوان البحث ، اسم المجلة ، رقم المجلد (العدد) رقم صفحتي البدء والانتهاء.

ب- للكتاب : اسم المؤلف او المؤلفين (السنة)، عنوان الكتاب، الطبعة، الناشر، الصفحة.

٥- تطبع الجداول والاشكال وترقم مع ذكر العنوان في الاعلى للجداول والاسفل للشكل .

٦- تصيح البحوث المقدمة الى المجلة ملكا للمجلة ولا تعاد الى اصحابها في حالة القبول او الرفض.

سكرتارية هيئة تحرير مجلة  
جامعة كويه الأكاديمية

## The Use of Social Networking Sites for Language Learning: Usages, Attitudes, Advantages, and Disadvantages

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### Abstract

Web 2.0 technologies, especially social networking sites (SNSs) have come into use by many people over the world. Nowadays, people use SNSs for different purposes. For educational purpose, particularly for language learning is this paper's major concern. This study examined the attitudes of students towards the advantages and disadvantages of using social networking sites for language learning (SNSLL). The only purpose of this study was to consider pedagogical implications of SNSs. Therefore, this paper tried to discover the students' present level of SNSLL use. Furthermore, this research aimed to diagnose the feelings and perceptions of the participants about using SNSs to learn a language. Finally, barriers that students encounter were analyzed. Thus, a questionnaire was administered to 28 fourth year students in department of English language at Koya University. Quantitative and qualitative analysis were used to analyze data.

The results showed that the students had positive attitudes towards the use of SNSLL. Moreover, the outcomes indicated that *Facebook*, *Google +*, and *Twitter* were the most common SNSs amongst the students. In addition to the benefits that were identified by the students; the findings came up with some barriers that the students face whilst using SNSLL. Eventually, this study brought about some pedagogical implications.

### 1. Introduction to SNSLL

Technology has occupied the whole fields of life. Education is not missed out from the technological advances. Notably, web 2.0 technologies covered the world of language learning and teaching, especially social networking websites.



Social networking sites (SNSs) are those online sites where people can create a personal account and through which contact with other users, or read and watch others' activities and interests. There is a wide range of social networking websites. There are the most crowded ones and the less crowded ones.

Social networks can be used in various ways: for entertainment, chatting, political or religious purpose, communication, and education. People, in general, use the social networks for entertainment and spending their leisure time. Social networking is one of the subjects that is repeatedly discussed in most people's daily speech. There are people who visit some social network websites, as they are addicted to them.

One of the uses of social networks is for educational purpose. They can be used as one of the most important websites for educational purposes, especially language learning and teaching. Learners usually want to practice what they learn; social networking sites are an appropriate place to practice your language. In other words, students can chat with teachers, other students, and native speakers all over the world. Further, teachers may assign students into groups in student-centered-learning to solve the problem of large classes. Moreover, learners often need to be taught in the easiest techniques and approaches, with authentic materials.

Although research has been conducted on the use of SNSs, the attitudes of students towards this subject are not clear. Further, even if their attitudes are positive, it is not clear whether they willingly use social SNSs for language learning or not. This study tries to find out their perceptions on this subject, their levels of SNSs use and for what purposes, and the benefits of social networking sites for language learning (SNSLL).

In addition, as there may be various advantages of SNSs, there may be disadvantages as well. Thus, this research attempts to diagnose any disadvantages of SNSs as well as barriers that may stop language learners from integrating SNSs into the process of language learning. This paper suggests some methods to overcome the barriers by using SNSs as devices of teaching.

## **2. Significance of the Study**

The present study offers both quantitative and qualitative investigations about usages, advantages, disadvantages, and attitudes towards SNSLL program. The purpose of this study is to find out the actual level of SNSLL use by EFL students, and to understand their viewpoints on SNSLL program. They are asked questions to what extent they use SNSLL, and whether they have a positive or negative attitude towards SNSLL.

Furthermore, there is little research about barriers to SNSLL. Therefore, this study may contribute to the literature by providing further detail on the factors behind non-use or infrequent use of SNSLL program.

At the local level, Koya University students do not seem to be sufficiently knowledgeable about the use of social networking websites for the purpose of second language acquisition. Therefore, this study aims at introducing them to that program by providing some essential knowledge on how to use SNSs for language learning outside the classroom. In addition, the potential results of this study may help students as well as teachers of Koya University (maybe other universities around the world) understand the advantages and disadvantages of integrating SNSLL into the process of language learning and teaching.

This study also attempts to address the following research questions:

- To what extent do EFL learners use social networking sites for language learning (SNSLL)?
- What are EFL students' attitudes towards SNSLL?
- What are barriers that prevent EFL students from using SNSLL?

In order to get answers for the research questions a questionnaire is prepared and administered to the participants.

## **3. Literature Review**

### **3.1. Technology**

Due to the rapid advancements in the process of education, a wide variety of approaches, techniques, methods, strategies, styles, materials and technologies are integrated into the process of teaching and learning. Nowadays, the use of technology for language learning and teaching is common among the educational institutions.

Zhao (2003: 8) and Vi (2005: 61) state that technology includes many different instruments like multimedia, computers, the Internet, videotapes, online chat-rooms, web pages, e-mail, electronic journals, databases, audio and video conferencing. "In addition to these technologies, recently innovated technologies have been incorporated into education such as mobile phone dictionaries, Moodle, Wiki, interactive whiteboard technology, computer games" (Hawkar, 2010: 2), and Web 2.0 technologies (e.g. social networking sites).



### 3.2. Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 was first coined by O'Reilly Media Group in late 2003 while preparing for a conference in 2004 (Allen, 2009: 2). Armstrong & Franklin (2008: 7) state that Web 2.0 is sometimes called "read/write web" and "social web" in which users can share and consume information while with Web 1.0 the owner of a web shares information and users can only read, listen to or watch that information.

Although nowadays, most of them are recognized as social networking websites, the researchers categorize Web 2.0 into several platforms; such as the following:

- Blogs (e.g.: Wordpress, Blogger, Edublogs),
- Microblogging (e.g. Twitter, Jaiku),
- Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia, wikispaces, etc.),
- Collaborative word processors (e.g. Google Docs),
- Syndication and aggregation using RSS (e.g. Bloglines, PageFlakes and iGoogle),
- Social bookmarking (e.g. del.icio.us),
- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace),
- And sharing content platforms – creative content exchange (e.g. Youtube, Flickr).

(Ryan & Fitzgerald, 2010: 1031; Armstrong & Franklin, 2008: 7, 8)

The current paper principally sheds light on social networking sites (SNSs) and their usages in higher education, especially for the process of language learning.

### 3.3. Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Social networking websites include a huge variety of sites. SixDegrees.com is recognized the first SNS launched in 1997 (Boyd & Ellison, 2008: 214). Furthermore, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Google+*, *MySpace*, *Flicker*, *Hi5*, *livemocha*, and *italki* are the most common sites among people over the world.

SNSs have been defined by different researchers. The most common one that is reused by many researchers is Boyd & Ellison's simple definition:

Social networks are web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

Boyd & Ellison (2008: 211)

Armstrong & Franklin (2008: 8, 9) identify SNSs as sites that allow people to create their community online and share their profiles with others. In addition, SNSs are those websites through which someone can have the opportunity to create an account to contact others and share their interests (Barnes, 2006 cited in Timm and Duven, 2008: 89). Similar to the definitions above (Dictionary.com) describes SNS as "A website where one connects with those sharing personal or professional interests, place of origin, education at a particular school", and so on. Thus, it can be understood that the aim of social networking is to connect people in order to give and receive information.

### 3.4. SNSs in Higher Education

SNSs can be used for different purposes. One of the usages of SNSs can be educational purposes. In many countries (especially, developed countries), the educational institutions use SNSs for educational purposes; including language teaching and learning. However, the integration of SNSs into the process of education is new to most EFL teachers and students in the under developing countries (somehow in the developing countries). "SNSs are sometimes used informally for learning purposes" (Juce & Valine, 2010: 56). Nowadays, SNSs are used as both marketing tools and learning tools by colleges (Gilroy, 2010: 21).

SNSs invaded the world of higher education. Universities and institutions can incorporate SNSs into the process of teaching and learning. This study mainly focuses attention on language learning. Significantly, many of the SNSs can be used for language learning. Particularly, *livemocha* and *italki* are devoted for language learning and teaching. Moreover, some of the others are also possible to be used for the purpose of language learning and teaching, especially, *Facebook* which is widespread among students.

### 3.5. *livemocha*<sup>1</sup>

*livemocha* is one of the social networks that are used for language learning. *livemocha* names itself as the world's largest online language community. Liaw (2011: 36) reckons that it is one of the language learning sites that is increasingly growing in population. *livemocha* was launched in September 2007 by Shirish Nadkarni (the owner of the idea) and Krishnan Seshadrinathan "in an attempt to change the way people learn language"

<sup>1</sup> Taken from *livemocha.com*



(Clark & Gruba, 2010: 166). Thenceforth, *livemocha* community has increased to over 16 million members from over 195 countries. People can access the website, to create an account, in 10 different languages.

*livemocha* helps people connect each other around the world to learn second language, regardless of ages and socio-economic status. It aims at creating a worldwide community that allows people to communicate with anyone, anywhere and anytime with no limits. It also emphasizes on the power of human potential because people have the ability to learn.

*livemocha* offers basic courses in 38 languages and active courses including grammar, pronunciation and sentence construction in five languages (English, Spanish, French, German, and Italian). Moreover, on *livemocha*, you can review someone's spoken and written work, and rate them according to some criteria.

Speaking criteria are pronunciation and proficiency. Writing criteria are grammar, spelling and proficiency. In the same way, your spoken and written work may be given feedback. In addition, *livemocha* provides learners with several different live and virtual classes. Therefore, it is understandable that *livemocha* is a SNS through which learners can learn a second/foreign language by themselves outside the classroom.

Furthermore, *livemocha* promises to

- Think of learners, teachers, and contributors equally.
- Help anyone who tries to learn.
- Provide successful and pleasant materials and courses.
- Give positive feedback to members.
- Offer easy ways to members to contact each other.
- Provide enough chances for practice.
- Understand the members' different needs, goals, and teaching and learning styles.

### 3.6. italki<sup>1</sup>

*italki* is a foreign language learning social network and marketplace that brings people together across the globe to communicate and learn. It was founded by American and Chinese entrepreneurs in December 2006. Initially, *italki* was registered as a company with a development team in Shanghai, China. On *italki*, users can learn more than 100 languages.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from *italki.com*

*italki* was created to (a) bring language partners together, and connect students with materials and teachers; (b) and provides learners, teachers, and companies with the opportunity to transact online. Further, *italki* was set out to change the way people learn a foreign language. Via *italki* everyone, everywhere can connect to language partners, language teachers, and language materials.

Learners can use the features of *italki* whenever and for whatever they need it. For example, when they have language exam, want to travel to another country, or want to know how to communicate in a business setting. There are some features of *italki*:

➤ **Professional lessons:** professional teachers (who have a degree or certificate in education) and experienced teachers (who are trained to teach a foreign language to non-native speakers) are available to teach lessons.

➤ **Informal tutoring:** Tutors who are knowledgeable and passionate about teaching their native language are tutoring learners.

➤ **Language partners:** This is where learners can find partners for language exchange.

➤ **Notebook:** Learners can write in the language they are learning and get helpful correction. On the other hand, they can correct others' notebook entries.

➤ **Answers:** Learners can ask questions about any language, or answer others' questions.

➤ **Discussions:** This is where the community can discuss any topic relating to language learning.

### 3.7. Facebook

*Facebook* is one of the most popular social networking sites among people all over the world. "*Facebook* was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, then a Harvard undergraduate" (Jones & Soltren, 2005: 5). *Facebook* is available in 50 languages. It is also claimed that *Facebook* is the most used and crowded SNS. Hampton et al (2011: 3) state that *Facebook* was the dominant SNS among the participants, with whom they conducted their study. Further, Weston & Bowden (2012: 2) suggest that *Facebook* had over 850 million active users in February 2012.

*Facebook* is aiming at providing people an opportunity to have the ability to share and make the world more open and connected. On *Facebook*, people can create an account to connect others. Users can share photos, videos, links, and their updates. Furthermore, they can chat with the community, text message and poke them (attract their attention for a



reason). Moreover, users can like, share, and comment each other's photos, videos, links, and updates.

There are many facets of *Facebook*. This paper briefly concerns itself about some of them.

1. **The menu bar:** Where you can see *friend requests*, *messages*, *notifications* (like, comment, tags, and pokes), *search bar* (search anything available on Facebook), *your timeline* (photos, videos, stories, experiences, and things about you), *home* (newsfeed), privacy shortcuts, and account setting.

2. **Left column:** Where you can see *edit your profile*, *your favorites*, *friends*, *groups* (created and joined), *pages* (created and liked), *apps*, and *interests*.

3. **Center column:** Where you can see *Status update* (type your posts, add photos, and videos), *yours and your friends' posts*, and you can like, share and comment on *yours and your friends' posts*.

4. **Right column:** Where you can see *create events*, *apps requests*, and *find more friends*.

### 3.8. How to use SNSs in Higher Education

As already mentioned, SNSs can be used in higher education. This paper concisely sheds light on the uses of the three SNSs above in higher education. Firstly, *livemocha* is highlighted. There are several activities in *livemocha* community.

(a) "Learn," vocabulary learning, reading, listening, unscrambling words, writing, speaking, and practicing dialogues; (b) "practice," recording the dialogue with a partner, recording a script and submitting for peer review, submitting a written essay for peer review; and (c) "share" as a tutor, correcting and rating writing or speaking exercises submitted by text or audio comments

(Jee & Park, 2009: 448)

*livemocha* is a good place to learn, practice and share many things that are useful for language learning and teaching. It can be used as a self-study language learning material by learners. As soon as you created an account, you can enroll for the courses. The courses include some features:

1. **Audio comments:** members can record voice messages and practice pronunciation;

2. **Peer review:** users can choose to allow other members to read, review and leave comments for other learners;

3. **Group chat sessions:** weekly meetings with tutors from *livemocha* to ask questions about language learning;

4. **Audio podcasts:** members receive audio lessons related to the language they are studying;

5. **Leader-board feature:** members of the SNS can see their position vis-à-vis other students based on their performance on test scores, thus adding an increased motivational and competitive factor to the online community.

(Harrison & Thomas, 2009: 117)

Secondly, *italki* is dealt with. Students can use *italki* for foreign language learning with and without teacher outside the class. On *italki* learners can find language partners to exchange languages. For instance, if someone speaks English and wants to learn Kurdish can find a partner that speaks Kurdish and wants to learn English. Additionally, learners can choose a teacher and tell them what they want to learn. Learners can choose any time to take their lessons. It is also possible to connect then on *Skype* – "a software application and online service that enables voice and video phone calls over the Internet" (Dictionary.com).

In addition, learners can practice and test their language using *italki*. Learners have the chance to practice their language with partners on exchange, write messages as pen pals, and chat with the community. Besides, they can write short essays in foreign languages, and get them corrected by native speakers. Another assistance of *italki* is taking online tests from great language learning companies such as Oxford University Press.

Finally, the use of *Facebook* in higher education is discussed. "It has been identified as a potential educational tool because it is already used extensively among college students" (Ryan, Magro, & Sharp, 2011: 2). There are many different ways of using *Facebook* in higher education, specifically for language learning. This study focuses attention on three easy ways, through which teachers and students can take benefit.

➤ **Personal account:** Teachers can use their *Facebook* account for further teaching. For instance, they can post explanations of their subjects (even absent students take benefit), and share relevant links, videos, pictures and documents. Moreover, students can read, watch, and comment on teachers posts. Likewise, students can do the same thing about their subjects. Furthermore, discussions can be hold between teacher and students, or among students. In addition, both teachers and students can message or chat with each other in order to ask questions or explain things for each other.



➤ **Creating a page:** Users (teachers or students) can create a page. Others can like it. Thus, they can share materials that are associated with teaching and learning process. Others who liked the page can share details about the same thing, and participate in discussions about the topic. Further, they can share anything that is useful for school connections. Although pages are quite similar to personal accounts, there is an important difference between them. Both can be individual and liked and followed by others. Users usually share various subjects on their personal account whereas users usually devote their pages for one single aspect.

➤ **Creating a group:** Users can create a group, and manage it as the admin (the manager) of the group. There are three features of groups: *Open* (anyone can see the group, who is in it, and what members post), *Closed* (anyone can see the group and who is in it. Only members see posts), and *Secret* (only members see the group, who's in it, and what members post). In other words, users can have a public group or a private group. You can create a secret group that may not appear in search. You can add others (learners) to your group. You can post teaching and learning related works (audios, videos, images, texts, links, PowerPoint, work sheets, and so on), and help others to participate in the group activities.

### 3.9. Advantages & Disadvantages

There are various advantages of Web 2.0 technologies. To begin with, the emergent of Web 2.0 technologies provide a wider opportunity to children, teenagers, and adults to learn (Clark, 2008: 1). Web 2.0 technologies interest different ages. Daugenti (2007: 9) states that the use of SNSs is easy and accessible; everyone is able to use it. Another advantage is that people in different countries, traditions, cultures, languages, colors, and genders are members of SNSs. Through exchanging information on cultures, traditions, historical places, people, and events, the participants of the SNSs take benefit from each other. They are able to practice the language they learn. Having knowledge on the culture of the speakers of the target language helps learners to better acquire that language.

Moreover, via SNSs learners of a second language can have the opportunity to contact native speakers of their target language, and other learners or teachers of the same language they learn, in different countries with different cultural backgrounds. Thus, they can practice their second language in order to improve it. Teachers also can have the same opportunity to contact native speakers of the language they teach or other teachers in other educational institutions. They may exchange knowledge on

how to better teach a foreign language. Besides, both teachers and students can benefit from the rich sources and authentic materials of SNSs.

In addition, Liu and Wu (2009: 2, 3) proclaim that Web 2.0 technologies have potential advantages for students if the teachers direct them to use Web 2.0 technologies for their learning process. Further, they state that students are able to be teachers of themselves via Web 2.0: their peers can learn from them as well as their teachers. Finally, "An upcoming trend of new Web 2.0 technologies provides a number of ways to cope with the challenges of higher education from both technical and pedagogical points of view" (Grodecka et al, 2008: 11). SNSs, as expected, offer higher education a way to deal with technical and pedagogical challenges.

As SNSs play a great role in the world of language learning and teaching, and have beneficial usages, there may be disadvantages as well. This research tries to investigate this issue. There may be barriers that possibly stop learners from using SNSs for language learning. For example, probably, not every student has access to computer and the Internet because of their high cost. Besides, perhaps, not every student is knowledgeable about the use of SNSs. In addition, SNSs may not interest every student's attention. Finally, there might be problems in using SNSs more than necessary.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Settings and participants

This study was conducted at Koya University/School of foreign languages/Department of English language. Koya University, which is a state university in Kurdistan region in the north of Iraq, almost all the students are Kurds. The reason for choosing Koya University is that it is my university; I want to help them with my project.

Questionnaire was administered to 28 fourth year students in department of English and translation. Since fourth year students have further experience with learning English language, this research was carried out with them. Table 1 below, provides some background information on the participants.



Table 1  
Information about the participants (Frequencies and Percentages)

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	17	60.7
	Female	11	39.3
Years of experience with SNSs	None	3	10.7
	2 years or fewer	17	60.7
	3-6 years	8	28.6
	7-10 years	0	0.0
	More than 11 years	0	0.0

As can be seen in Table 1, (60.7%) of the students who took part in the study were male and (39.3%) of them were female. In other words, the number of the male participants was greater than the number of female participants. Table 1 also shows that the participant students had different years of experience with SNSs. Oddly, three (10.7%) of the students proclaimed that they have no experience with SNSs, whereas (60.7%) of them had two years experience or fewer. Moreover, (28.6%) had three to six years experience. Typically, none of them had seven years experience or more with SNSs.

#### 4.2. Instruments and Procedure of data collection

In this study, a questionnaire (see appendix A), which consisted of multiple-choice and open-ended questions, was used as a data collection instrument. The questionnaire was prepared for EFL learners. Before preparing the questionnaire, a seminar (by the researcher) was held in the department to get feedback. After preparing the questionnaire, two of my colleagues, who have MA degree, revised the questionnaire. We, together, administered the questionnaire to five students, and analyzed it (a pilot study).

This study addresses three research questions. For each question, different parts of questionnaire were prepared. The first part provides information on the profiles of the participants, and the levels of the use of SNSLL. The students are asked questions about whether they use SNSLL or not; if yes, to what extent do they use it. The second part discovers the attitudes of the participants towards SNLL. The third part finds out the barriers to SNSLL.

The questionnaire was given to the students on 18<sup>th</sup> of May. They answered the questions and returned to the researcher the same day. In fact, the questionnaire was given to 31 students but only 28 of them completed the questionnaire.

#### 5. Results

In this study, two different types of data analysis were conducted: quantitative and qualitative. Statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used in order to compute frequencies and percentages of each item on the multiple-choice questionnaire. Furthermore, the data that was collected from the open-ended questionnaire was analyzed in a qualitative manner.

##### 5.1. Levels of SNSs use

In the first part of the questionnaire, three questions (Q3-Q5) were devoted to diagnose the participants' levels of SNSs use (see appendix A). The first one (Q3) asked the participants for what purposes they use SNSs. Further, (Q4) wanted them to indicate the SNSs that they use for language learning. For the first two questions, the students could tick more than one option. Finally, (Q5), which was an open-ended question, aimed to understand the way they use SNSs for language learning.

Table 2  
Levels of SNS use (Frequencies and Percentages)

		Frequency	Percentage
Q3: I use social networks:	For entertainment	13	46.4
	For language learning	22	78.6
	To spend my leisure time	6	21.4
	To chat with friends	16	57.1
	For other reasons	1	3.6
Q4: What Social Networking Sites do you use for language learning?	None	3	10.7
	Italki	0	0.0
	livemocha	0	0.0
	Facebook	22	78.6
	Twitter	9	32.1
	Myspace	0	0.0
	Google +	16	57.1
	Tagged	2	7.1
	Others	6	21.4



As it can be seen in Table 2, the participants suggested that they use SNSs for different purposes (Q3). (46.4%) for entertainment, (78.6%) for language learning, (21.4%) to spend their leisure time, (57.1) to chat with friends, and (3.6%) for other reason: i.e. one person said that s/he uses SNSs for other reason (games). Moreover, the participants selected several alternatives when asked what SNSs they use for language learning (Q4). (10.7%) of them said that they did not use SNSs at all. (78.6%) of them stated that they use *Facebook*. (32.1%) of them ticked twitter. (57.1%) of them selected Google + and (7.1%) of them picked Tagged. It is worthwhile to mention that no one chose *italki*, *livemocha* and *Myspace* while (21.4%) said that they use other SNSs such as (*Flicker*, *hi5*, *YouTube*, *Nimbuzz* and *Skype*).

In addition, question five, which was an open-ended question, came up with a list of responses. Table 3 shows the students' responses to Q5.

Table 3  
Students' responses to Q5 (in part 1)

Q5: In which way do you use SNSs for language learning? E.g. chatting with natives....etc.	
- They stated that they use SNSs to:	
- Chat with natives (speak with natives).	- Read many things in English.
- Chat with friends and teachers in English.	- Read to improve my reading (skill).
- Chat to improve my grammar, writing, and spelling.	- Watch Video.
- Contact with the world.	- Listen to conversation on Google +.
- Make fun with friends.	- Listen to improve my pronunciation.
- Use photo editing	- Play games.
- Learn new words each day.	- Write messages (in English) on <i>Facebook</i> .
- Play games to learn new vocabulary.	- Get PDF books and articles.
- Google to English Sources.	- Get information about (university) topics.
- Search ...	- Share written pictures.
- Find many useful references for language learning.	- Comment on friends' links.
	- Hit the like button of those pages (that are) relative to language learning.

## 5.2. Attitudes towards SNSLL

Table 4 shows the percentages of the participants who selected each response on the Likert Scale to items that related to their attitudes.

Table 4  
Percentages of attitudes towards SNSLL

	TD	D	N	A	TA
Q1: I like using SNSs for language learning.	7.1	3.6	7.1	35.7	46.5
Q2: I like using SNSLL because it makes my duty easier.	3.6	3.6	21.4	46.4	25.0
Q3: I think the use of SNSLL is more effective than the in-class lessons.	7.1	14.3	39.3	25.0	14.3
Q4: I think using SNSLL gives me more control over my learning.	3.6	7.1	28.6	39.3	21.4
Q5: I get less nervous than finding myself face-to-face with my teacher.	3.6	17.9	25.0	21.4	32.1

TD: Totally disagree; D: Disagree; N: Neutral; A: Agree; TA: Totally agree

As can be seen in Table 4, most of the students agreed (35.7% A and 46.5% TA) that they like using SNSs for language learning (Q1). Further, most of them agreed (46.5% A and 25.0% TA) that they like using SNSLL because it makes their duty easier (Q2), but (21.4%), which is significant, were neutral. Moreover, while almost half of the students (25.0% A and 14.3% TA) thought that the use of SNSLL is more effective than the in-class lessons, (39.3%) were undecided and some of them (7.1% TD and 14.3% D) refused that statement (Q3). In addition, more than half of them (39.3% A and 21.4% TA) thought that using SNSLL gives them more control over their learning (Q4), and more than one-fourth of them (28.6%) were not sure. Finally, approximately half of them (21.4% A and 32.1% TA) said that they get less nervous than meeting their teachers face-to-face (Q5), and one-fourth (25.0%) were neutral. Nonetheless, a significant number of the participants disagreed (3.6% TD and 17.9% D).

## 5.3. Barriers to the use of SNSLL

Table 5 identifies barriers that the participants encounter whilst using SNSs for language learning.



Table 5  
Percentages of barriers to the use of SNSLL

	TD	D	N	A	TA
Q1: I do not have adequate knowledge about how to use SNS for language learning.	25.0	28.6	32.1	10.7	3.6
Q2: I do not find a suitable language learning social networking site.	0.0	46.4	17.9	28.6	7.1
Q3: I do not have access to the Internet.	32.1	10.7	39.3	14.3	3.6
Q4: SNSs waste my time.	0.0	3.6	21.4	39.3	35.7

TD: Totally disagree; D: Disagree; N: Neutral; A: Agree; TA: Totally agree

As can be seen in Table 5, more than half of the students (25.0% TD and 28.6% D) denied if they do not have adequate knowledge about how to use SNS for language learning (Q1), whereas some of them (10.7% A and 3.6%TA) acknowledged that they do not have enough knowledge on SNSLL, and (32.1%) were not sure. Furthermore, less than half of them (46.4%) disagreed that they do not find a suitable SNSLL (Q2), and more than one-third of them (28.6% A and 7.1% TA) agreed to the statement. Additionally, a considerable number (32.1% TD and 10.7% D) claimed that one of the barriers is that they do not have access to the Internet (Q3), and (39.3%) were undecided while some of them (14.3% A and 3.6% TA) agreed. Finally, most of the students (39.3% A and 35.7% TA) agreed that SNSs waste their time (Q4), and (21.4%) were not sure about that.

In addition, question five, which was an open-ended question, revealed many reasons that direct the participants avoid using SNSLL. Table 6 shows further details on Q5.

Table 6  
Students' responses on Q5 (in part 3)

Q5: Is there any other reason that prevents you from using SNSs for language learning? Please specify it:	
- Several students said No (nothing), and others said:	
- SNSs waste my time.	- Till now I do not have net; otherwise, I would like to use it.
- I have not time (to use SNSs).	- I am not happy with things for English learning on SNSs.
- I do not like it because it wastes my time.	- Class is better than SNSs.
- It wastes time and money.	- Teachers are not using it.
- I do not have plenty of time because I am busy with other things.	- Some of them are boring.
- We are students; we do not have enough money to spend on the Internet connection, and we do not have enough time because of a lot of subjects and activities to study.	- Addition to SNSs.
- There are too many subjects. We are not sure which one is better. It needs time to read all of them. It wastes time.	- We cannot find sources for everything.

## 6. Conclusion & Discussion

In the light of preceding analysis, the outcomes contribute some discussions to the literature. The findings show that the participants' level of SNSLL use, their perceptions on SNSLL, and those constraints they confront vary.

### 6.1. Usages

The results showed that most of the students use SNSs for different purposes such as for entertainment, language learning, spending their leisure time, and chatting with friends. Significantly, most of them informed that they use SNSs for language learning. For the same reason, the participants were asked which SNS they use for language learning. *Facebook*, *Google+* and *Twitter* were the most used SNSs. Besides, they mentioned other SNSs like *YouTube* (a good place to watch videos) and *hi5* (a good place to play games).

In addition, the participants pointed out that they use SNSLL in different ways. To illustrate, they indicated that they use SNSLL to chat with native speakers, or their teachers and friends in English. Further, they stated that they use SNSs to read, watch, and listen to various sources in English, through which they can practice and improve their English



language. Another use is participating in a variety of activities on SNSs in English. Moreover, they play games in order to learn new vocabulary. Finally, they have the chance to be exposed to a huge range of English language materials and references.

### 6.2. Attitudes

The participants had different perspectives on SNSLL. Accordingly, most of them had positive attitudes towards SNSLL. To start with, most of them showed their preference to use SNSLL. Most of them thought that SNSLL makes their duty easier and gives them more control over their learning. Besides, a noticeable number of the participants stated that they get less nervous than meeting their teachers face to face; and the thought SNSLL is more effective than in-class lessons. Nonetheless, small number of them refused the two preceding ideas. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of SNSs for language learning is beneficial in the participants' points of view.

### 6.3. Barriers

As it has many considerable advantages, SNSLL has disadvantages as well. There are barriers to SNSLL. Throughout the quantitative analysis, this paper has showed several barriers. More than half of the participants refuted the idea that they do not have ample knowledge on how to use SNSLL. Another barrier this study wanted to diagnose was finding a suitable language learning SNS. Approximately half of the participants disagreed; however, a considerable number admitted that they are not able to find a suitable SNSLL. Moreover, not having access to the Internet was another barrier only for small percentage of the students. Nevertheless, three-fourth of them asserted that SNSs waste their time.

Additionally, the participant students acknowledged some significant disadvantages of and barriers to SNSLL. Chief among them, the students insisted that the use of SNSs is time consuming. They thought that they do not have enough time since they are busy with their study. They also believed that there are too many subjects out there; it wastes time to choose the suitable one among them. Further, they raised another drawback, which is addiction to SNSs. Some people seem to overuse SNSs. Oddly, another important point they mentioned was "teachers are not using it". Because their teachers do not use SNSs in the class, they are not willing to use it as well. There are also other points such as "Class is better than SNSs", "I am not happy with things for English language learning on SNSs", and "we cannot find sources for everything". Finally, the cost of Web 2.0 technologies (including the Internet) was another barrier as they said, "we

are students. We do not have enough money to spend on the Internet connection".

### 6.4. Limitations

There were three major limitations of this paper. The first one is the smallness of the numbers of the population. It cannot be generalized to the whole university. Secondly, the questionnaire did not include exact questions about advantages, though indirectly the participants expressed their ideas about benefits of SNSLL. Therefore, this paper provided details about advantages of SNSLL in literature review. Finally, not all the students completed the questionnaire. So, only those questionnaires were analyzed that was completed.

### 6.5. Pedagogical implications

The findings of this study showed that the participants had positive attitudes towards SNSLL. They can be directed in order to use SNSLL academically and in a safe way. Teachers can play a great role in teaching the students how to use SNSs for educational purposes, especially for language learning. The university may contribute to that issue by providing the students with academic courses on how to use SNSs in higher education.

Owing to high costs, not every student can have access to the Internet. Therefore, this study recommends that Koya University needs to have a plan to set the Internet centers, and provide the Internet connection for the student dormitories to enhance the students' performance and knowledge.

Moreover, the findings showed that the students are not familiar with *italki* and *livemocha*. Since they are two important language-learning communities, this research recommends that foreign language learners should use them. Thus, they can expose to a wide variety of language learning sources, materials, and partners in order to improve and practice their foreign languages.

In addition to the recommendations above, the current study suggests the following pedagogical implications:

- The curriculum may include the integration of SNSs into the process of language learning.
- Every faculty and department may have their own website in order to increase the students' involvement.
- Every lecturer may have their own webpage or blog for further teaching and learning process.
- For those classes in which a large number of students attend, SNSLL may be a good alternative to divide the students into small groups; and change it to a student-centered classroom.



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#### Appendix A

Dear Participant,

This survey aims to diagnose your attitudes towards the benefits of and barriers to the use of Social Networking Sites for Language Learning (SNSLL) as well as your present levels of SNS use. Your answers will be kept completely confidential.

Researcher: Hawkar O. Ali

#### Part I: Background Information and Levels of SNS use:

- 1) Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
- 2) Years of experience with Social Networking Sites:  
☐ None ☐ 2 years or fewer ☐ 3-6 years ☐ 7-10 years  
☐ more than 11 years
- 3) I use social networks: ☐ For entertainment.  
☐ For language learning. ☐ To spend my leisure time.  
☐ To chat with friends. ☐ For other reason
- 4) What Social Networking Sites do you use for language learning?  
☐ None ☐ italki ☐ livemocha ☐ cebook ☐ itter  
☐ Myspace ☐ Google + ☐ Tagged ☐ thers
- 5) In which way do you use SNSs for language learning? E.g. chatting with natives....etc.

#### Part II: Attitudes towards SNSLL.

Circle the answer that best shows your opinion.

1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Totally Agree.

1. I like using SNSs for language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I like using SNSLL because it makes my duty easier.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I think the use of SNSLL is more effective than the in-class lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I think using SNSLL gives me more control over my learning.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I get less nervous than finding myself face-to-face with my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

#### Part III: Barriers to the use of SNSLL.

Circle the answer that best shows your opinion.

1 = Totally Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Totally Agree).

I do not use SNSLL because					
1. I do not have adequate knowledge about how to use SNS for language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I do not find a suitable language learning social networking site.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I do not have access to the Internet.	1	2	3	4	5
4. SNSs waste my time.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Is there any other reason that prevents you from using SNSs for language learning?

Please specify it:

Thank you very much for your participation and contribution

Note/ the questionnaire was reviewed by two instructors who have MA in applied linguistics. It was also pilot studied with five students in order to know the shortages; no shortages were recorded.



استخدام مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية لتعلم اللغة  
كيفية الاستعمال، الآراء والافكار، الفوائد والمضار

تقنية الويب (٢٠٠٢) وخاصة مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية تستخدم من قبل كثير من الناس حول العالم. في هذه الايام يستخدم الناس مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية لأغراض مختلفة. كالأغراض التعليمية والأغراض التربوية، وخاصة لتعلم اللغة الذي يُعدُّ الهدف الرئيسي في هذا البحث. تناولت هذه الدراسة آراء وافكار الطلاب عن فوائد ومساوئ استخدام مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية لتعلم اللغة. وان الغرض الوحيد في هذه الدراسة ليتطرق الى خوف في النظامين التربوية مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية. بسبب ذلك، هذه البحث تحاول ان تغطي المستوى الطلاب الحالي من استخدام مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية لتعلم اللغة ومدى تأثير هذه المواقع عليهم. وعلاوة على ذلك، يهدف هذا البحث إلى تشخيص مشاعر وتصورات المشاركين حول مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية لتعلم اللغة. وأخيراً، تم تحليل العوائق والعقبات التي يواجهها الطلاب. لهذا السبب أُعطي استبيان إلى ٢٨ طالب من طلاب المرحلة الرابعة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة كويه. استخدمت التحليل الكمي والنوعي لتحليل هذه البيانات.

وأظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب لديهم آراء إيجابية حول استخدام مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية لتعلم اللغة. وعلاوة على ذلك، أشارت النتائج أن الفيسبوك، وجوجل +، وتويتر من أكثر مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية شيوعاً بين الطلاب. بالإضافة إلى الفوائد التي تم تحديدها من قبل الطلاب، وكذلك أظهرت النتائج بعض العوائق التي تواجه الطلاب أثناء استخدام مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية لتعلم اللغة. وأخيراً، هذه الدراسة خلوصة الى النظامين التربوية.

به کارهیتانی سایتته تۆره کۆمه لایه تیه کان بۆ فیربوونی زمان  
چۆنیتهی به کارهیتانی، دید و بۆچون، سوود و زیانه کاریان

ته کهنه لوجیای ویب (٢٠٠٢)، به تاییهت سایتته تۆره کۆمه لایه تیه کان له لایهن خه لکانیکی زۆره له سه رانه ری جیهان به کارده هیترین. ته م رۆژانه، خه لک سایتته تۆره کۆمه لایه تیه کان بۆ مه بهستی جیاواز به کار ده هیتن. بۆ مه بهستی په روه ده و خویندن، به تاییهت بۆ فیربوونی زمان جیتی بایه خی سه ره کی ته م توژیینه وهیه. ته م توژیینه وهیه له بۆچوونی خویندکاره کان له به ری سوود و زیانه کاری به کارهیتانی سایتته تۆره کۆمه لایه تیه کان بۆ فیربوونی زمانی روانیه. تاکه ناماهی ته م توژیینه وهیه په چاو کردنی ده رکوته فیرکاریه کاری سایتته تۆره کۆمه لایه تیه کان بوو. سه ره بۆیه، ته م توژیینه وهیه هه ولی داوه بۆ دۆزینه وهی ناستی هه نوکه یی به کارهیتانی سایتته تۆره کۆمه لایه تیه کان بۆ فیربوونی زمان له لایهن خویندکارانه وه. وێرای ته مه ش، ته م توژیینه وهیه ناماهی بوو که هه مست و دیدی به ژداربووان له به ری به کارهیتانی سایتته تۆره کۆمه لایه تیه کان بۆ فیربوونی زمان ده ریجات. له کۆتاییدا، ته مه به ریستانه ی که خویندکاران به ره و رووی ده بنه وه شی کرانه وه. به م جهۆره، په رسیار نامه یه که درا به ٢٨ خویندکاری قۆناغی چوار له به شی زمانی ئینگلیزی له زانکۆی کۆیه. شیکر نه وه ی جه ندیتی و چۆنیته ی به کارهیتانی بۆ شیکار کردنی زانیاریه کان.

ته غامه کان نه وه یان خسته روو که خویندکاره کان بۆچوونی ته رییان هه بوو ده به ری به کارهیتانی سایتته تۆره کۆمه لایه تیه کان بۆ فیربوونی زمان. سه ره پای ته مه ش، ده رته غامه کان ده ریان خست که فه یس بووک، گووگل +، و تویتهر باوترین سایتی تۆری کۆمه لایه تیه کان لای خویندکاران. بێجگه له و سوودانه ی که له لایهن خویندکارانه وه ناسترا، دۆزینه وه کان جه ند به ریبه ستیکیان ده رخست که خویندکاران په ربه رووی ده بنه وه کاتی که سایتته تۆره کۆمه لایه تیه کان بۆ فیربوونی زمان به کار دیتن. له کۆتاییدا، ته م توژیینه وهیه جه ند ده رکه و تیککی فیرکاری خسته ته روو.



